



For Immediate Release

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Record Snowfall Hampers Access to Fire Hydrants

With the record snowfall in many Alaskan cities this year, Fire Departments around the State are asking Alaskans to help keep fire hydrants clear and accessible. Banking snow around, or over a fire hydrant creates problems for emergency fire crews. Blocking access, or reducing the visibility of hydrants increases the response time and could result in unnecessary property damage. Firefighters have to be able to locate the hydrant, remove the caps and attach the fire hose as quickly as possible. These caps are removed using a hydrant wrench; a process that cannot be done quickly when there is a build-up of snow around the hydrant.

Alaskans are requested to be observant of fire hydrant locations to ensure that emergency access to those hydrants is maintained. Hydrants on dead end streets and near parking lots are especially susceptible to being blocked.

If you clear the snow off a fire hydrant in front of your property/home/business, you help cut fire department response time dramatically. Firefighters say it's also helpful to them if you clear a three foot path around the hydrant so they can hook up the hoses easier. If you are unable to help clear snow from a hydrant, call your local Fire Department and report the location of the blocked hydrant.

Remember, water is the main tool firefighters use to extinguish fires. Delays in locating and connecting to the fire hydrant could hamper fire suppression, thereby increasing possible loss of life, the risk of injury, and additional property damage.

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